

Civil Rights and the School Child Nutrition Programs

**Connecticut State Department of Education
Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services
and Adult Education**

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Civil Rights Requirements

- Federal legislation establishes regulations and requirements for recipients of federal funds to prohibit discrimination and ensure equal access to all programs and activities of the recipients.
- Based on these requirements the U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination in Child Nutrition Programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability and sex.

Child Nutrition Programs Requirements

- Public Notification
- Methods of Public Notification
- Limited English Proficiency
- Data Collection and Reporting
- Civil Rights Training

Public Notification

All Child Nutrition Programs must include a public notification system. The basic elements of the system are:

- Specific action to inform potential applicants and participants of their rights and responsibilities; the right to file a complaint; and the procedures for filing a complaint
- Inclusion of required non-discrimination statements on all informational releases, publications, and program information web sites.

Nondiscrimination Statement

“In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.”

“To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 or (202) 720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.”

Nondiscrimination Statement (cont.)

- If materials are too small to permit the full statement to be included, the material will at a minimum include the statement, in print no smaller than the text that:
- “This institution is an equal opportunity provider.”

Public Notification (cont.)

- Include a display of diverse populations in all graphics and photos.
- Provide information upon request in appropriate translations.
- Notify grassroots/minority organizations and provide lists upon request of those organizations.

Methods of Public Notification

- Prominent display of USDA “**And Justice for All**” 11 x 17 sized Posters;
- Inform parents, parents of potential participants and local grassroots & minority organizations of the program and significant changes. (newspaper, radio, internet, letters, flyers, etc.);
- Provide appropriate information in alternate forms for persons with disabilities; and
- Convey the message of equal opportunity in all photographs and graphics on program information.

Limited English Proficiency

- Local agencies that fail to provide services to persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) may be discriminating on the basis of national origin.
- Agencies are required to take “reasonable steps” to assure meaningful access to services.
- What constitutes “reasonable steps” is contingent on a number of factors: the number of LEP persons served; the frequency LEP persons come in contact with services; the nature and importance the services; and the resources available to recipients and costs.
- Providing appropriate translations of income eligibility applications and parent letters.

Data Collection and Reporting

- Develop a method for data collection on the racial/ethnic breakdown of potential participants (free and reduced applications or data collected by school officials);
- Maintain data information on file for 3 years; and
- Establish procedures to ensure that the information is made available only to authorized State and Federal personnel as requested, or as part of Office of Management and Budget approved surveys.

Race and Ethnic Categories

Separate Categories shall be used to collect and report ethnicity and race:

Ethnicity:

1. *Hispanic or Latino*. A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.
2. *Not Hispanic or Latino*

Race and Ethnic Categories, continued:

Race:

1. American Indian or Alaskan Native
2. Asian
3. Black or African American
4. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
5. White

Civil Rights Training Requirements

School Food Authorities are responsible for providing annual staff training in civil rights requirements including information on:

- Collection and Use of Data;
- Effective Public Notification Systems;
- Complaint Procedures; and
- Customer Service

Questions????

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